

# **MORNING MEDITATION**

## **The Nativity of Saint John the Baptist**

**Without courage we can never attain to true simplicity.  
Cowardice keeps us ‘double minded.’”**  
(Thomas Merton)

### **Isaiah 49:1-6**

Isaiah encountered disappointments and began to feel that he had wasted his time and had worked for nothing. He came out of this experience with renewed faith in his calling. He also gained new insights about his vocation which gave him strength. He had an intense experience of being called by God even before his birth, “from his mother’s womb”, to be a “servant” and much more....to be a light to the nations.....that salvation “may reach the ends of the earth”.

### **Psalm 139**

**O Lord, you have probed me, you know me;  
You know when I sit and when I stand;  
You understand my thoughts from afar.  
My journeys and my rest you scrutinize,  
With all my ways you are familiar.**

### **Acts 13:22-26**

In this excerpt, Luke tells us that Paul saw John the Baptist as the herald of Jesus. John proclaimed a baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel and prepared the people for welcoming the messiah, the newborn king of Israel, the savior of the world.

### **Luke 1:57-66; 80**

Zechariah and Elizabeth were facing the tragedy of their life while they continued to fulfill their religious and social obligations. Zechariah was in the temple, waiting on God and God spoke to him and promised fulfillment of his hearts longings....He was going to have son.

**God’s voice comes to those who listen in faithfulness. Good news comes even when hope seems dead.**

In Palestine, the birth of a boy was an occasion of great joy. When the time of birth was near, friends and neighbors gathered near the house. When the birth was announced, musician broke into music and song and great rejoicing, if it was a boy - and went away sad if it was a girl. So, Elizabeth’s house there was double rejoicing - she had a child in her old age and it was a boy.

On the eighth day, the boy was circumcised and named. Girl could be named any time within thirty days after birth. Names were descriptive. John is shorter name for “Jehohannan”, meaning, “God’s Gift” – the sign of parents’ gratitude for unexpected joy.

**Even the neighbors wondered: “what will this child turn out to be!” Every child is a bundle of possibilities!**

**The coming of a child into a family is the greatest privilege because it is God’s gift and the greatest responsibility because this gift carries unlimited potentialities that parents and educators must help actualize.**

**God has his own special name for you. He chose you before the foundation of the world, formed you in your mother’s womb, knows and calls you by name right now.**

**Listen to him calling your name. Accept, Affirm and welcome the name He gives**

Zechariah had a great vision for his son. He thought of his son as a prophet - a forerunner, who would prepare the way of the Lord. He broke into a beautiful song: “Benedictus” as it is known throughout history. Sing and pray and meditate the “Benedictus” today.

**Saint of the Day, June 23 - St. Joseph Cafasso and 21 other saints are remembered this day**

Joseph Cafasso was born at Castelnuovo d'Asti in Italy to peasant parents on January 15, 1811. He studied at the seminary at Turin and was ordained in 1833. He continued his theological studies at the seminary and university at Turin and then at the Institute of St. Francis, and despite a deformed spine, became a brilliant lecturer in moral theology there. He was a popular teacher, actively opposed Jansenism, and fought state intrusion into Church affairs. He succeeded Luigi Guala as rector of the Institute in 1848 and made a deep impression on his young priest students with his holiness and insistence on discipline and high standards.

He was a sought-after confessor and spiritual adviser, and ministered to prisoners, working to improve their terrible conditions. He met Don Bosco in 1827 and the two became close friends. It was through Joseph's encouragement that Bosco decided his vocation was working with boys. Joseph was his adviser, worked closely with him in his foundations, and convinced others to fund and found religious institutes and charitable organizations. Joseph died on June 23 at Turin and was canonized in 1947.

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